

USE OF INTERNET-ENABLED DEVICES DURING THE SCHOOL DAY

In May 2025, a new law was enacted that prohibits students from using non-school-issued internet-enabled devices during the school day while on school grounds. The law applies to all New York state school districts, Boards of Cooperative Educational Services, and charter schools, including DREAM Charter School. This policy was developed in consultation with DREAM Charter School's stakeholders, including school leadership, staff, parents, and students.

For purposes of this policy, the following definitions apply:

Internet-enabled device(s): smartphone, tablet, smartwatch, or other devices capable of connecting to the internet and enabling the user to access content on the internet, including social media applications, including, without limitation, computing devices such as laptops, iPads, and tablets; portable music and entertainment devices such as iPods and gaming consoles.

Non-internet-enabled device(s): cellular phone or other communication device not capable of connecting to the internet or enabling the student to access the internet.

Parent: a student's parent(s) or guardian(s) or person(s) in any parental or custodial relationship to the student, or any individual designated by the parent to act in loco parentis

School Day: The entirety of the instructional day (including all non-instructional time during the school day, such as homeroom period, lunch, recess, study halls, and passing time).

School Grounds: All building structures, athletic playing fields, playgrounds, or land contained within the real property boundary line of the school.

Students shall not use internet-enabled devices during the school day on school grounds unless such use is subject to an exception set forth in this policy. This policy does not preclude the use of (i) non-internet-enabled devices, or (ii) internet-enabled devices supplied by the school for educational services that are used for an educational purpose.

Exceptions

1. If authorized by a teacher, principal, or school for a specific educational purpose;
2. Where necessary for the management of a student's healthcare;
3. In the event of an emergency;
4. For translation services;
5. On a case-by-case basis, upon review and determination by a school psychologist, the school social work or school counsel, for a student caregiver who is routinely responsible for the care and well-being of a family member;
6. Where required by law.

Students must be permitted to use an internet-enabled device where the use is documented on an:
a) Individualized Education Program (IEP); or b) Section 504 Plan.

A parent may make a request under one of the above exceptions to their student's Principal. Any healthcare-related exception must also include documentation from a healthcare professional affirming such need.

On-Site Storage of Internet-Enabled Devices Including Cell Phones

Students must store their Internet-enabled devices in designated on-site storage areas during the school day. On-site storage areas may include, but are not limited to, student lockers, designated storage bins in classrooms, or secure storage areas in the school's main office. The designated on-site storage areas must be easily accessible to students and provide adequate security to ensure the safekeeping of the students' devices.

Principals will communicate the procedures for storing and retrieving devices, ensuring that students understand their responsibilities in using the on-site storage facilities provided.

Methods for Parents to Contact Students During the School Day

To accommodate necessary communication from parents, parents may use the following methods to contact their student during school hours while adhering to this policy:

- a) School Office or Alternate Location Phone: Parents may call the school's main office and follow the school's procedures for getting a message to a student.
- b) Parent-to-School Communication: To support student well-being and streamline communication, parents may direct messages to their student's Dean of SEL and Community, who will then facilitate appropriate communication with the student as needed.

Student Discipline for Accessing Internet-Enabled Devices During the School Day

DREAM Charter School is prohibited from suspending a student solely for accessing internet-enabled devices in violation of this policy; however, DREAM's Code of Conduct outlines consequences and/or interventions for student violations of this policy.

Security of Devices

DREAM Charter School will exercise reasonable care to maintain the security of devices that are held by the School but cannot guarantee the devices will be secure. DREAM Charter School shall not be responsible for any personal device that is lost, stolen or damaged during the school day or at school-sponsored activities. Any lost, stolen or damaged personal device should be reported immediately to the school Principal.

Posting and Translation of Policy

As required by law, this policy will be available in a clearly visible and accessible location on DREAM Charter School's website. Translations of the policy into the 12 most common non-English languages spoken by limited-English proficient individuals in the state will be provided upon request by a student or parent.

Reporting and Mitigation Action Plan

Beginning September 1, 2026, and annually thereafter, DREAM Charter School will publish an annual report on our website detailing the enforcement of this policy during the prior school year. This report will include non-identifiable demographic data of students who have faced disciplinary action for non-compliance and analysis of any demographic disparities in the enforcement of this policy. If a statistically significant disparate impact of enforcement is identified, the report will include a mitigation action plan.